

# Visitor Guide 2020



“... the most luxuriant and the most extravagantly beautiful of all the alpine gardens I ever beheld in all my mountain-top wanderings.”

—John Muir, conservationist, 1889

John Chao photo

Expect limited services and facilities due to COVID-19 impacts. Check locally or at [nps.gov/mora](https://www.nps.gov/mora) for facility status.

## Welcome to Mount Rainier National Park!

### 2020 SEASON ALERTS

#### Backcountry Camping Permits

**All permits must be obtained in advance of your visit.** A wilderness permit is required for all overnight camping in the wilderness of Mount Rainier National Park. Walk-up permits will not be issued until it is safe and practical to do so. For permits and information visit <https://www.nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/wilderness-permit.htm>.

#### Disappointment Cleaver Climbing Route Changes

**Climbers will find very different conditions on this route this season.** For an indefinite period this summer, it will no longer be a novice climbing route. For more information visit <https://www.nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/climbing.htm>.

#### Plan Ahead for Limited Services

**Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many visitor centers, ranger stations, and hospitality services will be closed or providing limited services this year.** For current information on services check locally or the park website <https://www.nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/covid-19-visitor-guide.htm>

The mission of the National Park Service is to preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. We proudly hold parks in trust for the American people and, even more proudly, welcome visitors from all communities back into Mount Rainier National Park as coronavirus pandemic restrictions begin to ease.

It is also our mission to keep everyone at Mount Rainier healthy, including our staff and all who visit. To that end, Mount Rainier is modifying visitor services to help prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Some facilities and programs will be closed or cancelled. Please check locally and on the park website for current information and continue to follow CDC guidelines. As circumstances continue to change and we modify our operations as necessary, we thank you for your patience and cooperation.

Mount Rainier is a beacon to many, attracting a diversity of people to its slopes. We welcome all who come and encourage everyone to make this a safe place for all to enjoy.

We urge you to recreate responsibly by parking only in designated areas, packing out everything you bring with you, visiting at times other than busiest of the day, maintaining social distance from others and if you encounter a crowded trailhead or overlook, seek another location to recreate.

We hope you will find the fresh air, beauty, and solitude of this mountain to be restorative. While returning to nature may seem safe, it is critical to remain vigilant despite the feeling of distancing ourselves from the spread of coronavirus.



### Stay Healthy: Recreate Responsibly

**Avoid crowded areas.** Seek another location to recreate.

**Practice physical distancing.** Keep six feet between you and anyone who doesn't live with you.

**Wear a mask and practice good hygiene.** Keep your hands clean and avoid touching any high-traffic surfaces. Wear a mask when you must be in close contact with others.

**Leave no trace.** Always pack out what you pack in, including gloves and masks.

**Don't take unnecessary risks.** Be extra vigilant and avoid injury and the need for Search and Rescue (SAR). Each mission poses potential exposure of SAR teams to coronavirus.

### What's Inside?

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### Keep in Touch!

Mount Rainier National Park  
[www.nps.gov/mora](https://www.nps.gov/mora)



@MountRainierNPS



**Carbon River near Chenuis Falls**  
JD Hascup photo

# Explore Mount Rainier National Park

At 14,410 feet high, Mount Rainier is the tallest peak in the Cascade Range and an icon of the Pacific Northwest. While the mountain's well-known profile is visible for many miles in every direction, its alpine, glacier-clad slopes occupy only a third of Mount Rainier National Park. There are as many different sides of the park as there are views of Mount Rainier. Take the time to explore the other two-thirds of the park and discover what lies within the shadow of this great mountain that local American Indians call "Tahoma."

Whether you are looking for wilderness solitude or historical architecture, spectacular drives or challenging hikes, Mount Rainier National Park has something for you. This Visitor Guide includes information that will help you plan your activities and have a safe and enjoyable visit.

There are five major visitor areas in the park:

- Longmire (southwest)
- Paradise (south side)
- Ohanapecosh (southeast)
- Sunrise/White River (northeast)
- Carbon River/Mowich Lake (northwest)

Parking can be difficult to find on sunny summer weekends at Paradise, Sunrise, Grove of the Patriarchs, and at trailheads between Longmire and Paradise. To avoid congestion, visit these areas on weekdays, arrive early, and carpool.

*Park roads are winding, road shoulders are narrow, and the speed limit is 35 mph in most areas. Watch for pedestrians, sightseers, bicyclists, and wildlife. Please be courteous and use pullouts to allow faster drivers to pass you safely.*

If you are in the park on a busy day, you may want to explore less-visited areas to escape the biggest crowds. In taking the extra time to seek out these special places, you can immerse yourself in an old-growth forest, reflect next to a cascading waterfall, hike in virtual solitude, or just relax, take in the view, and reconnect with nature. No matter where you go in the park you will find spectacular scenery and a multitude of recreational opportunities!

*Mount Rainier is the traditional land of the Cowlitz, Muckleshoot, Nisqually, Puyallup, Squaxin Island, and Yakama tribes. Indigenous traditional practices are intrinsic with the land and continue to this day.*

## Get the Most Out of Your Visit

Visiting for a few hours or a day? Here's some tips to help you get the most out of your visit:

### Half Day in the Park?

- Drive to Sunrise for a picnic, a short hike to Emmons Vista, and outstanding mountain and glacier views. Download and listen to the free Sunrise Road Geology Audio tour along the way <https://go.usa.gov/xwXt2>. Stop at White River for the best data service to download.
- Visit Chinook Pass and Tipsoo Lake for a hike around the lake through lush subalpine meadows.
- Hike two miles round-trip along the Ohanapecosh River from the Ohanapecosh Campground to view Silver Falls.
- Explore Longmire's historic district and hike the Trail of the Shadows.
- Hike Nisqually Vista or Myrtle Falls trails at Paradise and enjoy a picnic with a view!
- Hike the Grove of the Patriarchs loop trail to explore an ancient old-growth forest.
- Take a drive through the park stopping at overlooks of mountain views, waterfalls, and geologic features.
- Some great hikes for young families are Trail of the Shadows at Longmire, Nisqually Vista at Paradise, Box Canyon loop trail in Stevens Canyon, Hot Springs trail at Ohanapecosh, Sunrise Rim at Sunrise, and Grove of the Patriarchs near Stevens Canyon Entrance.

### One Day in the Park?

- Hike into the Tatoosh Range for excellent views of the mountain. Hardy hikers can try the Eagle Peak or Pinnacle Peak trails.
- Visit Reflection Lakes for amazing views of the mountain that will be reflecting in the lake's surface. Then hike up to Bench and Snow lakes for a moderate hike.
- Take a geology tour along the southside of the park. Stops include (west to east) Westside Road, Kautz Creek, Glacier Bridge, Ricksecker Point, Inspiration Point, Box Canyon, and viewpoints along the way.
- Spend the day hiking through subalpine meadows at Sunrise or Paradise.
- Hike a section of the 93-mile Wonderland Trail that encircles the mountain. Many people hike this trail in sections. Try hiking from Lake Louise to Box Canyon in Stevens Canyon or Sunrise to White River, Longmire to Narada Falls or Reflection Lakes. All require a vehicle at each trailhead.
- Take a drive up the dirt road to Mowich Lake to see the park's deepest lake surrounded by wildflowers in summer, followed by a hike to Spray Park for mountain views.
- Hike to a historic fire lookout for great views of the mountain and surrounding area.



Gas is not available inside the park. Gas stations are located in local communities.



Cellular service is not available in most of the park. At Paradise, cell service is available at lower elevations.

| Road  | One Way Driving Times & Distances |         |
|---|-----------------------------------|---------|
|   | Distance                          | Time    |
| Longmire to Paradise                              | 12 miles                          | 25 min  |
| Paradise to Ohanapecosh via Stevens Canyon Rd     | 23 miles                          | 45 min  |
| **Ohanapecosh to White River Entrance             | 18 miles                          | 30 min  |
| White River Entrance to Sunrise                   | 13 miles                          | 45 min  |
| White River Entrance to Carbon River via Enumclaw | 61 miles                          | 2 hrs   |
| Longmire to Carbon River via Eatonville/Orting    | 80 miles                          | 2.5 hrs |
| Longmire to Mowich Lake via Eatonville/Orting     | 89 miles                          | 3 hrs   |

**\*\*Expect delays when traveling Stevens Canyon Road.**

# What You Need to Know

Mount Rainier National Park was established in 1899 to preserve the natural and cultural resources in this area and to provide for public benefit and enjoyment. This information will help you learn more about the park, and protect yourself and the park.

## Accessibility

Most restrooms, visitor centers, picnic areas, amphitheaters, and designated campsites are accessible or accessible with help by wheelchair. Accessible lodging is available inside the park and in local communities.

The park brochure is available in braille at visitor centers and entrance stations.

The Kautz Creek Boardwalk Nature Trail is accessible with assistance in summer. An accessible trail leads to the base of Paradise Meadows; a portion of the trails at Paradise are accessible with help.

## Mercury in Park Lakes

Research studies have shown mercury is present in some trout in a few park lakes. Check the Washington Department of Health website <http://www.doh.wa.gov/> for information on fish consumption.

## Don't Be A Victim!

Burglaries have occurred at numerous trailheads and parking areas in the park. Those responsible for the crimes were investigated, arrested by Mount Rainier rangers and National Park Service special agents, and convicted in court. However, these convictions will not necessarily end the problem of car burglaries in the park.

Follow these simple guidelines to avoid becoming a victim of future car break-ins:

- Do not leave any valuables in your vehicle, even for a short time.
- Do not leave bags, packs, or purses, that look like they could contain valuables visible in your vehicle.
- If storing items in the trunk of your car, do so before arriving at your destination. You could be watched at trailheads and parking lots.
- Immediately report all suspicious activity you observe at or around parking lots or along roads to a park ranger.

## No Drone Zone!

Launching, landing, or operating an unmanned aircraft (drone) within the boundaries of Mount Rainier National Park is prohibited.



## Campfires

Are only permitted in established grills in campgrounds and picnic areas. Campfires are not permitted in Mount Rainier's backcountry. Collecting firewood is prohibited. Firewood is sold in Cougar Rock, Ohanapecosh and White River campgrounds.

## Wildlife Safety

Give animals room. The best way to stay safe when watching wildlife is to give animals room to move. Stay a minimum distance of 25 yards from most wildlife and 100 yards from predators like bears.

## Bikes in the Park

Bicycle only on roads, not on trails. Mountain bikes are permitted on Westside Road and Carbon River Road, but not on trails.

## Camping

Camp in designated campsites only. Sleeping in vehicles outside of campgrounds is not permitted.

## Firewood: Buy It Where You Burn It

Buy firewood near where you will burn it—that means the wood was likely cut within 50 miles of where you'll have your fire. Never bring wood from home, even if you think the firewood looks fine. Aged or seasoned wood is still not safe.

Firewood sales are available in the park at the Longmire General Store and at Cougar Rock, Ohanapecosh, and White River campgrounds.

## Tree Hazards

Healthy trees with no defects can present a danger under certain conditions. Stay alert for falling limbs and cones on windy days, and avoid forested areas during storms when possible. Sudden gusts can do great damage to trees—as well as anything in range of falling debris.

**Protect the meadows:** Stay on trails. Leave all wildflowers for everyone to enjoy.

## Climbing

Each year, approximately 10,000 people attempt to climb Mount Rainier. Nearly half reach the 14,410-foot summit. Climbing permits are required for travel above 10,000 feet and/or on glaciers. Climbing information including fees, routes, and conditions, as well as wilderness permits required for overnight stays, are available on the park website.

Please Note: Those wishing to climb above 10,000 feet or onto any glaciers must pay the climbing cost recovery fee AND get a climbing permit. This includes skiers or "single push climbers". Climbers who wish to camp overnight must also get a wilderness permit in order to acquire a camp site.

Pay your annual climbing fee through [pay.gov](http://pay.gov); keep your receipt and print or save it on your phone to serve as proof of payment; and bring a picture ID.

For the 2020 season, guided climbs and seminars are available through:

- Alpine Ascents International (206) 378-1927
- International Mountain Guides (360) 569-2609
- Rainier Mountaineering (888) 892-5462

## Pets and Service Animals

*During hot weather do not leave pets in vehicles.*

Leashed pets and emotional support animals are permitted only in picnic areas, campgrounds, and parking lots and on roads currently open to public vehicles. They must be on leashes no longer than six feet and are not allowed in buildings, on trails (except the PCT), or in off-trail or backcountry areas.

Service animals are allowed on trails and in park facilities only if they are providing a service for a person with a disability. Service dogs-in-training are not service animals under ADA, but are considered pets.

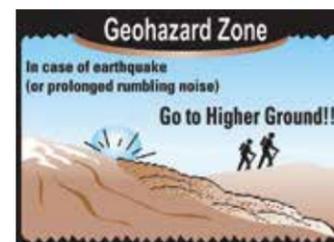
## Permits

Permits are required for all overnight stays in the backcountry, and for traveling on glaciers and above 10,000 feet in elevation.

## Wilderness Camping Permits

The park's permitting process has changed for the 2020 season in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. At this time, we anticipate continued access to the Mount Rainier Wilderness during the summer season, but walk-up permits will not be offered until it is safe and practical to do so. **All permits must be obtained in advance.**

A wilderness permit is required for all overnight camping in the park's wilderness. All wilderness permits must be obtained in advance. Walk-up permits will not be issued. Permit requests will not be accepted after October 10, and all permits after that date will be at self-registration stations.



## Mount Rainier: An Active Volcano

Active steam vents, periodic earth tremors, and historic eruptions provide evidence that Mount Rainier is sleeping, not dead. Seismic monitoring stations around the mountain should provide days or weeks of advance warning of impending eruptions. Other geologic hazards, however, can occur with little warning. These include debris flows and rockfalls.

*If you are near a river and notice a rapid rise in water level, feel a prolonged shaking of the ground, and/or hear a roaring sound coming from upvalley—often described as the sound made by a fast-moving freight train—move quickly to higher ground—200 feet above river level should be safe.*

Detailed information is available at park visitor centers or from scientists at the U.S.G.S. Cascades Volcano Observatory, [vulcan.wr.usgs.gov](http://vulcan.wr.usgs.gov).

## Drive-in Campgrounds

Check campground open/close status locally or at [nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/hours.htm](http://nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/hours.htm).

| Camp-ground  | Elev.   | Sites | Group Sites | Toilets | Dump Station | Maximum RV/Trailer Length |
|--------------|---|-------|-------------|---------|--------------|---------------------------|
| Cougar Rock* | 3,180'  | 173   | 5           | Flush   | Yes          | RV 35'/Trailer 27'        |
| Ohanapecosh* | 1,914'  | 188   | 2           | Flush   | No           | RV 32'/Trailer 27'        |
| White River  | 4,232'  | 112   | 0           | Flush   | No           | RV 27'/Trailer 18'        |
| Mowich Lake  | Primitive walk-in campground, tents only. 10 sites. No fee (must self-register at campground kiosk). Vault toilets, <i>no potable water</i> . No fires allowed. Elevation 4,929'; generally open July through early October, depending on road and weather conditions. Call 360-829-9639 for information. |       |             |         |              |                           |

\*Advance reservations are recommended for individual sites at Cougar Rock and Ohanapecosh Campgrounds. Reservations for group sites are recommended and are available throughout the season. These can be made up to one year in advance. To make a reservation online, go to [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov) or call 877-444-6777. Some sites may be closed for hazard tree mitigations.

## Mount Rainier National Park

**Superintendent**  
Chip Jenkins

**Mailing Address**  
55210 238th Avenue East  
Ashford, WA 98304

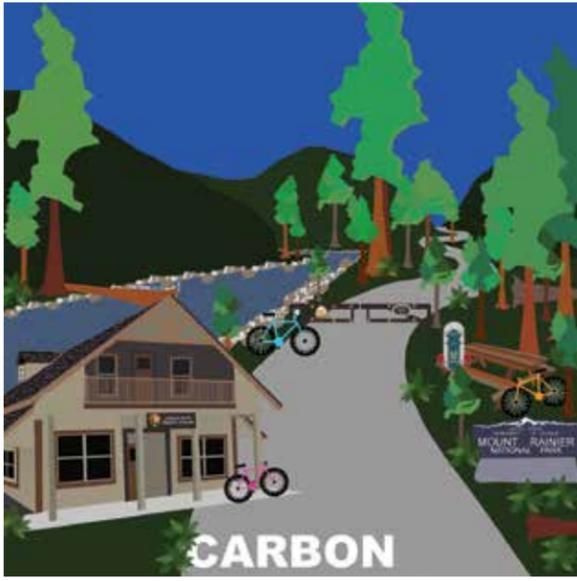
**E-mail**  
[MORAInfo@nps.gov](mailto:MORAInfo@nps.gov)

**Park Headquarters**  
(360) 569-2211

**Lost and Found**  
(360) 569-6608



# Northwest: Carbon River and Mowich Lake



## Carbon and Mowich Lake Services and Facilities

*Facilities may be closed, or have limited hours or services. Check locally or at [nps.gov/mora](https://www.nps.gov/mora) for facility status.*

**Carbon River Ranger Station**  
Obtain permits online prior to arrival in the park.

**Camping** There is a walk-in campground at Mowich Lake. A backcountry camping permit is required for the Ipsut Creek Campground at Carbon River. Campground information is available on page 2.

Located on the “quiet side” of the park, the Carbon River valley showcases ancient forests, deep valleys, waterfalls, and a dynamic, flood-prone river that flows from the Carbon Glacier, the lowest-elevation glacier in the contiguous United States. Or follow State Route 165 to Mowich Lake, the park’s largest and deepest lake. Look for colorful subalpine wildflowers along its shores. From the picnic area at road’s end, trails lead to subalpine lakes, flower-strewn meadows, and amazing views of the park’s wilderness from the Tolmie Peak fire lookout.

**Picnic** Picnic tables are located at the Carbon River Ranger Station and Entrance, and along Mowich Lake Road at Paul Peak and Mowich Lake.

**Carbon River** The dynamic, glacier-fed Carbon River that continues to braid and change channels as glacial sediment deposits shape its path.

**Carbon River Entrance** Restrooms, picnic tables, and an interpretive trail are available. Stretch your legs on the short 0.3 mile interpretive trail and discover a unique inland rainforest among Sitka spruce, Douglas-fir, western hemlock, and western red cedar. Note that the bridge is out so this is not currently a loop trail.

**Carbon River Trail** This former road is now a trail due to repeated flooding. Hike or bike the trail through this rainforest environment as the forest reveals views of the Carbon River and surrounding mountains. From the parking lot the trail gains approximately 600 feet in elevation along its 5 mile length; some sections are rough and rocky. *Bicycles are not permitted on any other trails in the area or in any off-trail areas.* Bicyclists are subject to the same laws as motor vehicles. Travel safely, and always wear a helmet.

**Old Mine Trail** (Moderate, 3 miles, 2 hours round-trip) Explore a trip to the past by peering into the shaft of an open mine at the trail’s end. Hike or bike 1.2 miles from the parking lot to the trailhead.

**Chenuis Falls** (Moderate, 7.8 miles, 4.5 hours round-trip) Enjoy this trail that leads across the Carbon River on a footlog to the gently cascading Chenuis Falls. From the parking lot, hike or bike 3.7 miles to the trailhead. Check trail conditions at the ranger station. The footlog is subject to wash out.

**Green Lake** (Moderate, 10 miles, 5 hours round-trip) This trail ascends through old-growth forests to the beautiful clear lake. A short side trail before Green Lake takes you to Ranger Falls. From the parking lot hike or bike 3.2 miles to the trailhead.

**Mowich Lake** Canoes glide across this subalpine lake with the wakes ruffling the mountain’s reflections. Enjoy the serenity while fishing the deep waters or hiking the nearby trails. The road to Mowich is unpaved after the first three miles and may be rough. Mowich is reached via state SR 165.

**Tolmie Peak Fire Lookout** (Moderate, 5.6 miles, 3 hours round-trip) The historic fire lookout offers spectacular panoramic views of Mount Rainier and surrounding areas. Follow the Mowich Lake shore to Ipsut Pass for views of Carbon River Valley, Eunice Lake, and the final ascent up Tolmie Peak. The trail begins at the last bend in the road on the Mowich Lake Road, 5.5 miles from the park boundary. Please stay on the main trail near Eunice Lake to protect the fragile environment.

**Spray Park Trail** (Moderate, 6 miles, 4 hours round-trip) Beautiful subalpine meadows with views of Mount Rainier are some of the rewards along this trail. The trail begins on the west side of the Mowich Lake Campground. Take the 0.25 mile spur to Spray Falls, a 300 foot cascading waterfall.

### Park Partners



Washington’s National Park Fund  
[wnpf.org](http://wnpf.org)



Mount Rainier National Park Volunteers  
[www.nps.gov/mora/getinvolved/volunteer.htm](http://www.nps.gov/mora/getinvolved/volunteer.htm)



Washington Trails Association  
[www.wta.org](http://www.wta.org)



Discover Your Northwest  
[www.discovernw.org](http://www.discovernw.org)



Visit Rainier  
[visitrainier.com](http://visitrainier.com)



Mount Rainier National Park Associates  
[www.mrnpa.org](http://www.mrnpa.org)



Mount Rainier Institute  
[www.packforest.org/mtrainierinstitute/](http://www.packforest.org/mtrainierinstitute/)

# Southwest: Visit Historic Longmire

Deep in the valley of the Nisqually River, the village of Longmire preserves the history of the park's first settlement and headquarters. The Longmire Museum is the starting point for the self-guided walking tour of the Longmire Historic District, where you can get a taste of early National Park Service rustic architecture. Follow the Trail of the Shadows to learn about the park's first homestead and resort, next to Longmire Meadow's mineral springs. Between Longmire and Nisqually Entrance, walk the Twin Firs Trail to view lowland old-growth forest; picnic at Kautz Creek to view the aftermath of the 1947 mudflow; or drive to Westside Road to see the dramatic results of flooding and rockfall. For great views of lava layers, glaciers, and deep glacial canyons, stop at the viewpoints along Ricksecker Point Road, between Longmire and Paradise.

**Bicycle or Hike Westside Road** A popular mountain bike route, this gravel road is 13 miles one-way with an elevation gain of approximately 1,120 feet. *Bicycles are not permitted on any park trails, or in any off-trail areas.* Bicyclists are subject to the same laws as motor vehicles. Travel safely, and always wear a helmet.

**Twin Firs** (Moderate, 0.6 miles, 30 minutes round-trip) Look for the Twin Firs trail on the north side of the road one mile east of Kautz Creek or two miles west of Longmire. This short loop trail climbs through some of the best examples of the immense Douglas-firs that line much of the road between the Nisqually Entrance and Longmire.

**Picnic** Picnic tables and restrooms can be found at Kautz Creek, Longmire, and three miles up the road at Cougar Rock Picnic Area.

**Trail of the Shadows** (Easy, 0.7 miles, 30 minutes round-trip) Across the road from the Longmire Museum and National Park Inn, this loop trail circles mineral springs, a beaver pond, a historic cabin, and massive Douglas-fir and western red cedar trees. This easy trail takes you through the forested edge of a meadow filled with mineral springs. Perfect for families and nature lovers. Across the road, visit the outdoor information station at the Longmire Museum and ask for Junior Ranger Activity Books, or pick up a to go lunch at the National Park Inn.

**Rampart Ridge** (Strenuous, 4.6 miles, 2.5 hours round-trip) The Rampart Ridge Trail branches off from the west side of the Trail of the Shadows, climbs steeply to the ridge-top, then circles back to Longmire by way of the Wonderland Trail. The lower portions of this trail climb through stands of ancient trees of various ages. Some Douglas-firs on the east side of the loop are around 1,000 years old.

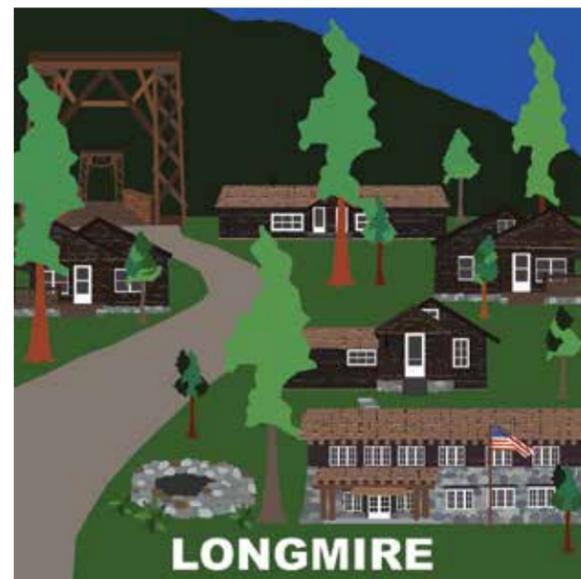
**Eagle Peak** (Strenuous, 7.2 miles, 5 hours round-trip) Eagle Peak offers panoramic views of the Nisqually Valley and Mount Rainier. The lower portions of the trail climb steeply through stands of ancient Douglas-fir and younger mountain hemlock trees.

**Carter Falls** (Moderate, 2.2 miles, 2 hours round-trip) Stroll along the Paradise River from Cougar Rock Campground to Carter Falls. Forest ages vary from very young to very old, with some stands less than a century old and some more than 700 years old.

**Christine Falls** A viewpoint just off the road gives you a beautiful view of Christine Falls beneath the stone arch of the road bridge. Please pull completely off the road to park in a designated pullout. Walking on the road to view the waterfall can be hazardous.

**Comet Falls and Van Trump Park** (Strenuous, 3.6 miles, 2.5 hours round-trip to Comet Falls) Look for a diversity of wildflowers in the forest and rocky canyon environments along this rugged trail, or climb another steep mile beyond the falls to a beautiful subalpine meadow.

**Narada Falls** A short but moderately steep walk takes you to a breathtaking view of Narada Falls, on the Paradise River. On a sunny day, you can often see a rainbow refracted in the cool spray of the falls.



## Longmire Services and Facilities

*Facilities may be closed, or have limited hours or services. Check locally or at [nps.gov/mora](https://www.nps.gov/mora) for facility status.*

Longmire Museum  
Outdoor Information Station

Restrooms  
Located between the Museum and historic gas station.

Picnic Area  
Located next to the gift shop.

Wilderness Information Center  
Obtain permits online prior to arrival in the park.

National Park Inn  
Grab and Go food, Gift Shop, Lodging

### Help Shape the Future of the Carbon River Corridor

Pierce County is working with property owners and recreationists to explore the future of recreation in the Carbon River Corridor (from Wilkeson to the park boundary) to develop a Cooperative Action Plan. We need your help! To learn more or become involved visit <https://www.piercecountywa.gov/6801/Carbon-River-Corridor-Cooperative-Action>

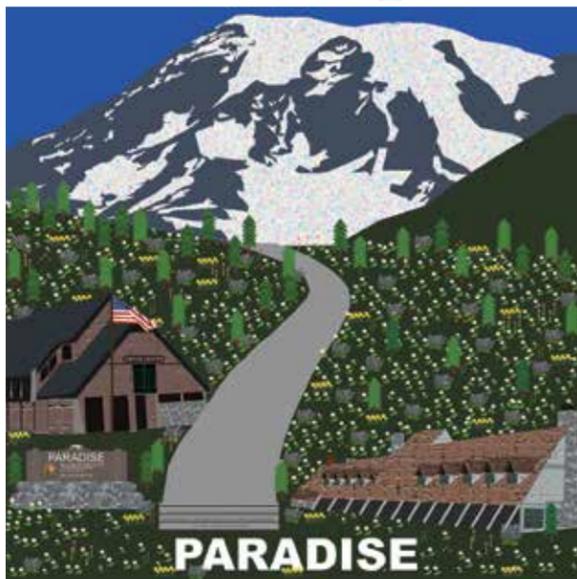


Longmire Administration Building  
NPS photo

### Emergency

Dial 911 from any phone located inside the park

# South: Explore Paradise



## Paradise Services and Facilities

*Facilities may be closed, or have limited hours or services. Check locally or at [nps.gov/mora](https://www.nps.gov/mora) for facility status.*

### Visitor Center

Restrooms, Outdoor Information Station, Water Fountain

### Information Boards

Located outdoors the visitor center to assist with planning your day at Paradise.

### Plaza Restrooms

Located off the upper parking lot, adjacent to the main plaza.

### Picnic Area

Located below and across the road from the lower parking lot.

### Paradise Wilderness Information Center (Guide House)

Obtain permits online prior to arrival in the park.

Besides glaciers, rivers, and forests, this area is rich in history, offers plenty of hiking, and has breathtaking vistas and a stunning profusion of wildflowers. Plan to visit mid-week, or early or late in the day, to avoid crowds and traffic. Enjoy the meadows, take in a view of the mountain, or hike the trails.

A network of hiking trails provides access to outstanding wildflower meadows, broad views of Mount Rainier and its glaciers, and routes for skilled climbers attempting to reach the mountain's summit. Photographers appreciate the high-country scenery at Inspiration Point and Reflection Lakes. Hikers looking for less-crowded trails might try the Lakes Trail, Mazama Ridge, and Snow Lake Trail, located just east of Paradise. Consider Nisqually Vista or Myrtle Falls for young hikers, or Alta Vista or Glacier Vista for the more ambitious. Take lots of water and sunscreen!

**Picnic** Enjoy your picnic at the main picnic area located below the lower parking lot. There are also picnic tables in the plaza outside the visitor center.

**Information Boards** Stop at one of the information boards set up around Paradise for trip planning information and maps.

**Outdoor Information Station** To pick up a brochure or talk to a ranger look for the information station set up outside the visitor center.

**Deadhorse Creek** (Moderate, 2.5 miles, 1.75 hours round-trip) The flowers in this sheltered canyon bloom later but often more luxuriantly than anywhere else. Loop back on the Skyline Trail, or continue on to Glacier Vista.

**Nisqually Vista** (Easy, 1.2 miles, 45 minutes round-trip) Not as steep as most trails at Paradise, this route loops through flower-filled meadows and subalpine firs to a view of the Nisqually Glacier.

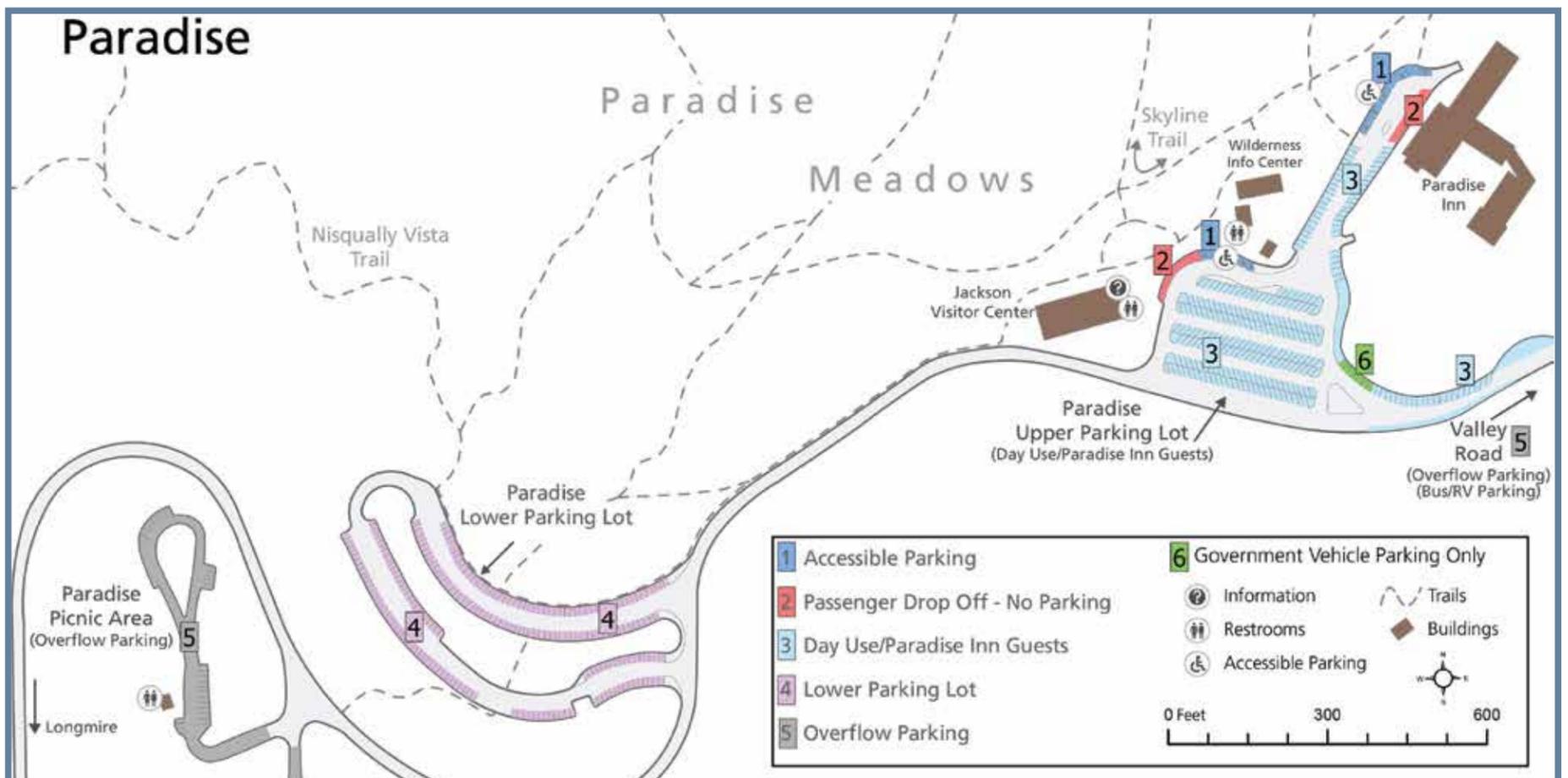
**Myrtle Falls** (Easy, 1 mile, 35 minutes round-trip) The trail to Myrtle Falls gradually climbs through lush meadows to 60-foot Myrtle Falls. You can't beat this walk for wildflowers or for the drama of cascading water. Keep your eyes and ears open for hoary marmots; they often sunbathe on the rocks above the creek.

**Alta Vista via the Alta Vista & Skyline Trails** (Moderate, 1.75 miles, 1.25 hours round-trip) This short hike climbs to the top of Alta Peak for outstanding views of Mount Rainier, the Tatoosh Range, and, in the distance, Mount Adams. Watch for marmots as you pass through the colorful meadows.

**Skyline Trail** (Strenuous, 5.5 miles, 4.5 hours round-trip) This trail offers a grand tour of Paradise Meadows, passing Alta Vista, Glacier Vista, Panorama Point, Pebble Creek, and Sluiskin and Myrtle Falls. The elevation ranges from 5,400 to 7,000 feet, with wet and dry, exposed and sheltered habitats. Shorter sections of the trail can be done, too.

**Great Mountain Views** Mount Rainier can be seen from many locations at Paradise. You may need to move a short distance or wait for some clouds to move, but the parking lots, plazas, and trails all offer good views of the mountain when skies are clear. There is no one best spot to see the mountain, but we recommend the Nisqually Vista Trail or the Alta Vista via the Alta Vista and Skyline Trails.





**Best Trails for Waterfall Views** Follow one of these hikes to view waterfalls in or near Paradise. Stay safe by not walking or climbing on rocks near waterfalls. Please stay on designated trails.

**Skyline Trail to Myrtle Falls and view of Sluiskin Falls** View Sluiskin Falls northwest of Myrtle Falls from Skyline trail just past Myrtle Falls.

**Paradise to Ruby Falls and Narada Falls** 2.2 miles round-trip. 800' elevation gain. Average hiking time: 1.5 hours. From the southeast corner of the upper parking lot, take the Lakes Trail down. Follow signs for Narada Falls. Enjoy the cascading Ruby Falls before reaching the Narada Falls parking area and viewpoint. Return the same route.

**Historic Buildings** Paradise has long been a destination for people attracted to Mount Rainier. In 1886, early entrepreneurs began providing visitor services at Paradise. Since then, the need for visitor facilities has grown and changed. Much of the 1920's village-like development has been removed throughout the years. Even so, in 1990, the roads, buildings, and trails that remained were

designated a National Historic Landmark District. Notice the massive timbers and local stone blending the buildings with the natural settings and the steeply pitched roofs that shed heavy snow loads.

**Paradise Inn** opened in 1917, is one of the oldest inns in the National Park system. The natural log architecture and handmade furniture makes this building a special visit. Former President Harry Truman played at the piano in 1945.

**Historic Paradise Ranger Station** was built in 1921. It is the small building at the top of the parking area. It is not open to the public and is now used for emergency service employees.

**Guide House** was built in 1920. For many years climbers began their climbs to Mount Rainier's summit from its threshold.

**Paradise Camp Lodge** was constructed in 1931 and demolished in the mid-1950s. The current visitor center stands on the original footprint of this building. Explore the signs and displays on the south side of the visitor center.



For online Paradise information and downloads including the Paradise area trail snow-cover map scan the QR code or go to <https://www.nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/paradise-basic-info.htm>

**Emergency: Dial 911**

## Discover Reflection Lakes and Nearby Trails

A short drive down the scenic Paradise Valley Road and along the top of Stevens Canyon Road leads to the picturesque subalpine scene of Reflection Lakes and Mount Rainier towering above. Often, the reflection of Mount Rainier is mirrored in the lakes. The Lakes Trail from Paradise to Reflection Lakes is an excellent alternative for those interested in getting in a hike.

### Along the Way

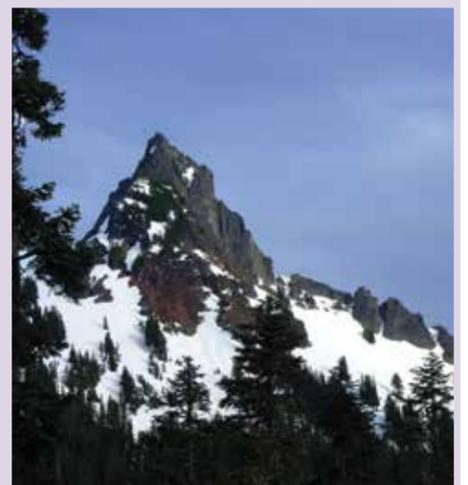
As you pass through Paradise Valley enjoy the wildflowers in summer or fall colors later in the year, watch for marmots and scan the valley and hillsides for black bear. After turning onto Stevens Canyon Road, stop at Inspiration Point for great views of Mount Rainier and the Tatoosh Range.



**Lakes Loop** (Moderate, 5 miles, 4 hours round-trip) The trail winds through picturesque subalpine meadows and forests and along subalpine lakes. This loop passes through Paradise circling along Mazama Ridge down to Reflection Lakes. Consider hiking this trail to Paradise from Reflection Lakes.



**Bench and Snow Lakes** (Moderate, 2.5 miles, 2 hours round-trip) Watch for views of Mount Rainier and the Tatoosh Range, wildflowers in the spring, huckleberries in the fall, and wildlife year-round on your way to these subalpine lakes. This trail is east of Reflection Lakes.



**Pinnacle Peak** (Moderate, 3.0 miles, 3 hours round-trip) Enjoy abundant wildflowers and spectacular panoramic views including Mount's Rainier, Adams, St. Helens, and Hood. This trail winds high onto the rocky slopes of the Tatoosh Mountain Range. This trail starts across the road from Reflection Lakes.

# Southeast: Stevens Canyon and Ohanapecosh



## Ohanapecosh Services and Facilities

*Facilities may be closed, or have limited hours or services. Check locally or at [nps.gov/mora](https://nps.gov/mora) for facility status.*

**Visitor Center**  
Outdoor Information Station

**Restrooms**  
Located adjacent to the visitor center and in campground loops.

**Picnic Area**  
Located across from the visitor center.

**Campground**  
The Ohanapecosh Campground is located in the southwest corner of the park on SR123. Campground information is available on page 2.

Ohanapecosh, in the park's southeast corner, lies deep in the realm of the old-growth forest. From the visitor center and campground, trails follow the Ohanapecosh River past hot springs and shaded streams to the roaring cascade of Silver Falls. Walk the trail to the Grove of the Patriarchs, just past the Stevens Canyon Entrance, to view ancient trees—some over 1,000 years old. Strong hikers will enjoy the incredible view from the Shriners Peak fire lookout, east of State Route 123, and the string of waterfalls along the East Side Trail. On Stevens Canyon Road between Ohanapecosh and Paradise, dramatic viewpoints and a picnic area are found at Box Canyon, where the Cowlitz River cuts a deep slot into glacially-scoured bedrock.

**Picnic** Picnic among the big trees at the Ohanapecosh Picnic Area, or stop at the picnic area west of Box Canyon.

**Stevens Canyon** West of Ohanapecosh, the park road traverses spectacular Stevens Canyon. During the summer, watch for wildflowers along the road. Later in the year, enjoy magnificent fall colors as huckleberries, vine maples, and mountain ash turn scarlet and purple.

**Box Canyon Trail** (Easy, 0.5 mile, 30 minutes round-trip) Follow the path of a glacier that has receded revealing evidence of polished slabs of rock. These rocks also show evidence of glacial movement with striations or scratch marks caused by ice-embedded rocks scraping their surfaces. A half-mile loop trail takes you to a viewpoint of two volcanoes and the steep, narrow box canyon of the Cowlitz River. Restrooms are just off the parking lot. A nearby picnic area is a great place to have lunch. Trail work is currently underway in this area, but access to the overlook and footbridge will be maintained.

**Grove of the Patriarchs** (Easy, 1.3 miles, 1 hour round-trip) At the east end of the Stevens Canyon Road is one of the most accessible stands of ancient trees in the park. A short self-guided nature trail and suspension bridge take you to a boardwalk loop through thousand year old Douglas-fir and western red cedar trees, protected from forest fires on an island in the Ohanapecosh River. Restrooms are located by the parking lot.

**Ohanapecosh** Spend the night among the big trees in the Ohanapecosh Campground or hike one of the many trails through old-growth forest. The most family-friendly campground in the park features big trees, creeks, and the Ohanapecosh River. Take a short stroll through the Ohanapecosh Hot Springs, or hike a 2.5 mile loop along the river to Silver Falls.

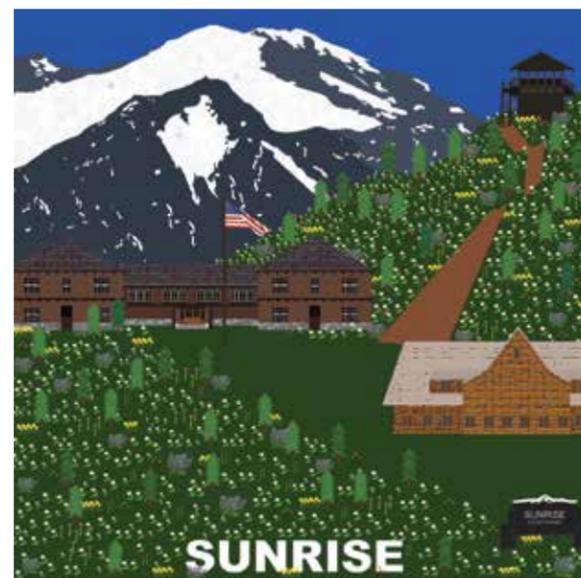
**Silver Falls Trail** (Moderate, 3 miles, 2 hours round-trip) This loop trail winds among 500 year old trees along both sides of the Ohanapecosh River. It is one of the best places to look for forest wildflowers and mushrooms, including many species uniquely found in the old-growth forest environment.

**Shriners Peak** (Strenuous, 8.4 miles, 6 hours round-trip) One of the steepest trails in the park climbs through the forest to an old burn, where dry meadow flowers like bear grass and paintbrush are abundant in the summer. A backcountry campsite is located at the top, near the old fire lookout. There is no water along this trail during most of the season, and little shade.

**East Side Trail** (Moderate, 11.5 miles, 6 hours one-way) Hike south from Deer Creek to the Grove of the Patriarchs past 700 - 1,000 year old trees along Chinook Creek and the Ohanapecosh River. This trail is best done with two vehicles, one parked at each end of the trail.



# Northeast: Experience Sunrise and White River



The White River/Sunrise Road leads from State Route 410 toward the White River Campground and high-country trailheads. From here, trails lead hikers to subalpine wilderness or to the moraine of the Emmons Glacier, the largest American glacier outside of Alaska. Continuing up the road toward Sunrise, look for outcrops of columnar lava, hillsides of wildflowers, and a breathtaking vista at Sunrise Point. Washington's highest paved highway ends at Sunrise (6,400 feet), where summertime crowds come to enjoy the area's open meadows and expansive scenery, considered by some to be the grandest views in the park. Along State Route 410, a trail leads strong hikers up to the scenic Crystal Lakes basin, and the Tipsoo Lake area near Chinook Pass provides a picnic area next to the lake and its lush meadows.

**Picnic** Enjoy lunch with a view at picnic areas located at Sunrise, White River Campground, and Tipsoo Lake.

**Owyhigh Lakes Trail** (Moderate, 7 miles, 3.5 hours round-trip) This hike offers solitude amongst old-growth forests to subalpine meadows and lakes. From the White River Road, climb steadily up the side of Tamanos Mountain through a 700 year old forest to Owyhigh Lakes.

**White River Patrol Cabin** Take a stroll back in time and discover the important role these cabins played in protecting the park. Located in the White River Campground.

**Glacier Basin Trail** (Moderate, 6.5 miles, 6 hours round-trip) Following in the footsteps of climbers, this trail leads to subalpine meadows, surrounded by mountains, and a backcountry camp.

**Emmons Moraine Trail** (Easy, 3 miles, 3 hours round-trip) Turn off on the spur trail from the Glacier Basin Trail to view the massive Emmons Glacier, the largest by area in the lower 48 states, with Mount Rainier towering above. The first part of this trail offers cascading waterfalls and cool forests.

**Sunrise** Hiking, gift shop, grab and go food, and restrooms are available. Numerous trails, of various lengths and degrees of difficulty, begin from the parking lot and wander through meadows filled with wildflowers during the peak bloom.

**Silver Forest Trail** (Easy, 2 miles, 1 hour round-trip) This lovely stroll includes abundant wildflowers and breathtaking views of the White River Valley, Emmons Glacier, and Mount Rainier.

**Berkeley Park** (Strenuous, 7 miles, 5 hours round-trip) Hiking into Berkeley Park provides an opportunity to experience a sampling of the park's wilderness. Towering mountains, subalpine meadows, multiple cascading streams, and wildlife excite the senses as you descend into this valley.

**Mount Fremont** (Strenuous, 5.6 miles, 3.5 hours round-trip) This historic fire lookout provides expansive panoramic views of the northeast side of the park. The trail passes through subalpine meadows to rocky slopes with low-growing plants adapted to the harsh alpine environment.

**Sourdough Ridge Trail to Dege Peak** (Moderate, 4.2 miles, 2.5 hours round-trip) Experience ridgeline hiking along the Sourdough Mountains with spectacular views of the Sunrise area, Mount Rainier, glaciers, subalpine meadows, wildlife, and the Cascade Mountain range.

**First Burroughs Mountain Trail** (Strenuous, 4.8 miles, 3 hours round-trip) Ascending high onto First Burroughs Mountain, this trail leads into alpine, tundra-like environment with unobscured views of Mount Rainier. Following the top of this old lava flow, you feel as if you could almost touch the mountain.

**Tipsoo Lake and Naches Peak** (Moderate, 3.5 miles, 2 hours round-trip) Wildflowers grow thick around this beautiful subalpine lake. Take a short stroll around the lake, or branch off on the longer and more diverse Naches Peak Loop, which features different flowers on the wetter west side and drier east side of the peak. This trail is located east of White River near Chinook Pass on SR 410.

## Sunrise and White River Services and Facilities

*Facilities may be closed, or have limited hours or services. Check locally or at [nps.gov/mora](https://nps.gov/mora) for facility status.*

### White River Wilderness Information Center

Obtain permits online prior to arrival in the park.

### Restrooms

Located at White River Entrance Area, White River Campground Picnic Area, Sunrise, and Tipsoo

### White River Picnic Area

Located in the campground.

### Sunrise Visitor Center

Outdoor Information Station

### Sunrise Picnic Area

Located north of the visitor center.

### Sunrise Day Lodge

Grab and Go Food, Gift Shop

### Camping

The White River Campground is located at the intersection of White River Road and Sunrise Road. Campground information is available on page 2.

## Emergency

Dial 911 from any phone located inside the park

## Sunrise Geology Rocks!

Download the free Sunrise Geology Audio Tour to explore the area with USGS Geologists.

<https://go.usa.gov/xwXt2>

Cellular data is normally available at White River Entrance.

# COVID Trail Etiquette

## PASSING ON TRAIL

Adapted from Washington Trails Association

### 1 GIVE OTHER HIKERS A WIDE BERTH

### 2 LET THEM KNOW YOU'D LIKE TO PASS

If you are coming up from behind them, a polite: "Coming up on your right/left." works well. Trail etiquette states the person going uphill has right of way.

### 3 PASS WITH AS MUCH SPACE BETWEEN EACH GROUP AS POSSIBLE

Try to stay on trails or step on rocks or surfaces to avoid trampling delicate meadow plants.

### 4 COVER YOUR MOUTH AND TURN YOUR HEAD AWAY AS YOU PASS

Use of masks while passing is recommended.

### 5 ACKNOWLEDGE THEM

Say a quick "thank you!" once you've passed.

## KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Visit [nps.gov](https://www.nps.gov) to find information on current park conditions and operations. Make a plan, have supplies on hand, and if you are sick, stay home.

## KEEP IT CLOSE

Respect state and local ordinances regarding the open status of the site you're visiting. The NPS is working closely with both government and health authorities to gradually expand access & services through the NPS.

## KEEP IT WITH YOU

Brought something in? It's your responsibility to take it out. Trash pickup and restrooms will continue to be limited through many NPS sites; as always, follow the "leave no trace" rule.

## KNOW YOUR LIMITS

Save that difficult hike or new outdoor activity for a future date, in the event of injury or accident. This will help first responders, parks and communities continue to focus on pandemic response.

## KEEP YOUR DISTANCE

When venturing outdoors, keep recreation to members of your household. Provide others with plenty of room in accordance with CDC social distancing guidelines of six feet, and cover your nose and mouth if safe social distancing is not possible.

# RECREATE RESPONSIBLY

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# Know Before You Go

## Hazards of the Season

*A beautiful day on the mountain can turn into dangerous whiteout conditions in a matter of minutes. Knowing what to do and making the right decision can be the difference between life and death.*

Winter snowpack may linger late into summer on the mountain with snow potentially covering portions of trails into August. However, keep in mind that snow is not the only issue when it comes to safe backcountry travel.

### Route-finding Challenges

Trails may be snow-free at lower elevations but anticipate and prepare for snow at higher elevations. Conditions change rapidly during the day and footprints in the snow quickly disappear. This has left many day hikers disoriented upon their return trip, expecting to simply follow their own tracks back to the snow-free trail. This results in many lost individuals, injuries, and fatalities. When route-finding, note important landmarks. If the trail becomes difficult to follow, stop and find where you are on the map before continuing.

### Be Prepared

If at any point you feel uncomfortable or unprepared, turn around. If you plan on retracing your route back to the trailhead consider using wands on snow-covered trails. Always carry a good map and compass, and actively use them. For best coverage beneath a forest canopy supplement your map and compass with an external-antenna GPS.

Consider the steep snow slopes, melt holes, thinning snow bridges, and other early season hazards that you may encounter, and be honest with yourself in assessing your skills and experience.

### Plan Ahead

- Protect yourself by wearing appropriate outdoor clothing including footwear.
- Be prepared for rapidly changing weather.
- Carry the ten essentials even on a short sightseeing hike.
- Always tell someone of your travel plans so

they can notify the park if you fail to return.

- If visibility is poor, do not travel at all.
- Plan your route ahead of time, have a backup plan, and never travel alone.

### Snow Avalanches

The greatest danger is an avalanche that you trigger by skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, or climbing. Be prepared for travel in avalanche terrain. Carry a transceiver, probe, and shovel and know how to use them. Determine if the location you are traveling is avalanche prone. If in doubt, ask questions or don't go. Unstable snow may slide at any time, not just in winter! Even small avalanches can be deadly.

### Mountain Weather Changes Rapidly

A pleasant outing can quickly transform into a survival ordeal. Proper gear (adequate boots, ice axe, the ten essentials, etc.) is a must. Navigation in spring storms can be extremely difficult. If you're ascending and clouds or fog start rolling in, turn around and head back to the trailhead. If that's not possible, stop, dig in, and wait for better weather.

### Cross Streams Safely

Many hikers underestimate the power of moving water and some consider their former successful stream crossings as a ticket to the other side. This may not be true. Use these pointers in making wise decisions when crossing streams.

- Early morning when river levels are generally at their lowest is the best time to cross.
- Look for an area with a smooth bottom and slow moving water below knee height.
- Before crossing, scout downstream for log jams, waterfalls, and other hazards that could trap you. Locate a point where you can exit if you fall in.
- Use a sturdy stick to maintain two points of contact with the ground at all times.
- Unfasten the belt of your pack so you can easily discard it if necessary.
- Staring down at moving water can make you dizzy. Look forward as much as possible.



WASHINGTON'S  
NATIONAL  
PARK FUND

## Show Some Love for Your National Parks

Washington's National Park Fund (WNPF) provides a clear pathway for people who love Mount Rainier National Park to give back to this special place.

WNPF is the only partner providing philanthropic support exclusively to Mount Rainier, North Cascades, and Olympic National Parks. Support helps to fund priority projects in four core areas:

- advancing science and research
- improving visitors' experiences
- expanding volunteerism and stewardship
- providing for youth and family programs



The Fund provides support for over 2,000 volunteers here at Mount Rainier National Park whose efforts are valued at \$1.8 million! Whether you purchase a Washington National Parks license plate for your vehicle, support one of WNPF's fundraising climbs, include the Fund in your estate plans, or give monthly, it all adds up and has a major impact on this beloved place.

For more information please go to the Fund's website [wnpf.org](http://wnpf.org) or email them at [fund@wnpf.org](mailto:fund@wnpf.org).

## BEFORE STEPPING OFF THE TRAIL...



... consider this: each step into a meadow crushes an average of 17 plants!

*When exploring Mount Rainier's fragile meadows, hike only on maintained trails or thick patches of snow.*

## Classic Backcountry Practices

### CARRY THE 10 ESSENTIALS *and know how to use them!*

1. Map and compass
2. Sunglasses, sunscreen, and hat
3. Extra clothing (warm!) and rain gear
4. Flashlight or head lamp (extra batteries)
5. First aid supplies *including hand sanitizer and masks*
6. Waterproof matches or lighter
7. Repair kit and tools (for gear)
8. Extra food
9. Extra water
10. Emergency shelter

### LEAVE NO TRACE

- Plan ahead & be prepared
- Travel & camp on durable surfaces
- Dispose of waste properly
- Leave what you find
- Minimize campfire impacts\*
- Respect wildlife
- Be considerate of others

\*Fires are for emergency use only; they are not allowed in Mount Rainier's Wilderness.

Learn more at [lnt.org](http://lnt.org).

## KEEP WILDLIFE WILD



Mount Rainier provides habitat for many species of animals. When you visit the park, you are visiting their home. The choices you make have a direct effect on the wild animals that live here.

### Feeding wildlife harms animals

- Nest predators like jays and ravens will be attracted to the area and therefore may decrease populations of songbirds inhabiting that area.
- Wildlife will be drawn to areas with high vehicle traffic, causing animals to get struck by cars.
- Many animals have specialized diets and the wrong foods can negatively affect their health.

### Help keep park wildlife wild

- Do not feed animals, including birds.
- Store your food in an animal-proof container, or inside your car.
- Do not leave food, beverages, pet food, or toiletries unattended for any length of time.
- Clean up picnic areas after you eat.

# Keep Yourself and Others Healthy

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



## COVID-19 Safety Alert

**The National Park Service encourages you to follow CDC guidance to reduce the spread of COVID-19.**



If you feel sick, please visit another day.



Practice social distancing. Maintain at least 6 feet of distance between you and others.



Wear a face covering when social distancing cannot be maintained.



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer.



Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

**Thank you for helping to keep yourself and others safe and healthy.**